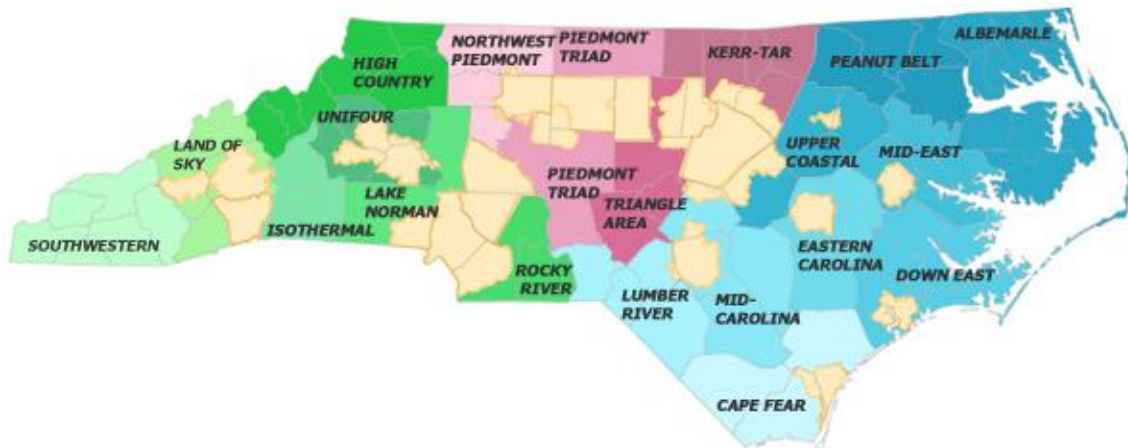


# RPO Manual

# 2012



**RPO Administrative Procedures Manual**

**Updated Edition  
2012**

**Produced by the NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch  
In conjunction with the  
North Carolina Association of Rural Planning Organizations**

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## Background

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### The Manual

The purpose of this document is to provide each LPA with the tools necessary to effectively manage a Rural Planning Organizations (RPO) program. The manual also provides North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) staff with the information and timelines to provide effective oversight of individual RPOs. The manual is organized by work task. It provides detailed timelines, guidance, document templates and examples where necessary. Templates are provided to be the basis for document submittals. Examples are provided to demonstrate the potential scope of a specific document. Revisions to the standard documents, when required, should consider the templates and examples provided in the manual. Dates given in this document should be interpreted as the nearest business day before the date if it happens to fall on a holiday or weekend.

### Authority

Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs) were developed in response to [Senate Bill 1195 which amended General Statute 136, Article 17](#) which directed NCDOT to develop a plan to establish RPOs. NCDOT completed its report in early 2001 and 20 RPOs were established between 2001 and 2003. As defined in 136-66.210, an RPO is “a voluntary organization of local officials formed through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to work cooperatively with the Department to plan rural transportation systems and to advise the Department on rural transportation policy”.

The boundaries of a RPO may coincide with, but not overlap the boundaries of a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or another RPO.

GS 136-212 identifies four primary duties for RPOs:

- Developing, in cooperation with the Department (NCDOT), long-range, local and regional multimodal transportation plans;
- Providing a forum for public participation in the transportation planning process;
- Developing and prioritizing suggestions for transportation projects the organization believes should be included in the State’s Transportation Improvement Program (STIP); and
- Providing transportation-related information to local governments and other interested organizations and persons.

### Organization

According to GS 136-211 (b), an RPO must consist of at least three contiguous counties with a population of at least 50,000 people. An RPO consists of an administrative entity which provides the professional staff to the RPO, a Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) consisting of local staff from member governments and agencies and a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) made up of elected and appointed officials.

#### Lead Planning Agency (LPA)

The LPA serves as the administrative entity for the RPO. Eligible administrative entities include a regional council of governments, regional economic development agencies, chambers of commerce and local governments. The LPA receives and expends funds on behalf of the RPO. The LPA provides at least one (1) full time equivalent professional staff member to carry out the duties of the RPO within the context of an adopted plan of work. The LPA is defined within the

adopted MOU, and may be changed based on the agreement of the RPO member governments and NCDOT.

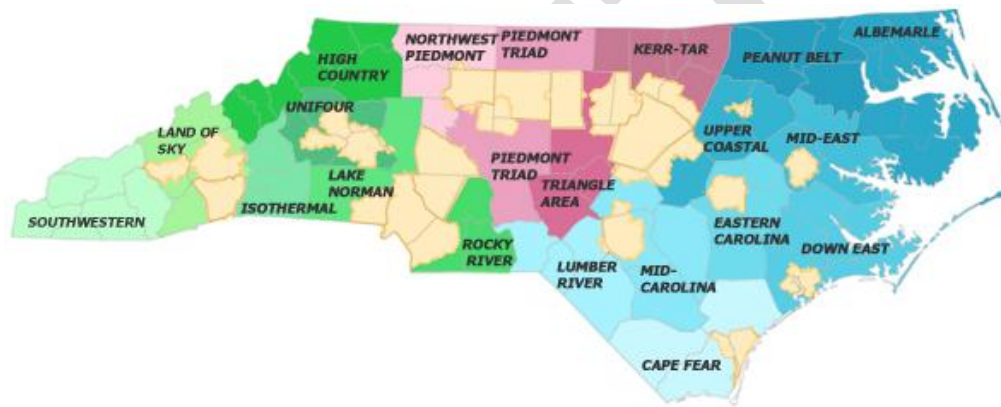
#### Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)

The TCC consists of staff members from local government members, agencies and NCDOT. The TCC provides guidance and recommendations to the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). The TCC membership is defined within the adopted MOU.

#### Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC consists of local elected officials and a North Carolina Board of Transportation member. The TAC establishes the goals, priorities and objectives of the RPO, reviews and recommends changes to comprehensive transportation plans within its boundaries, reviews and approves an annual plan of work, and reviews and prioritizes transportation improvement projects for submission to NCDOT. The TAC membership is defined within the adopted MOU.

**Figure 1: The Rural Planning Organizations of North Carolina**



#### **Funding**

The RPO program is currently funded on a reimbursement basis using Federal State Planning and Research Funds (SPR), with a 20% local match required. Allocations vary based on population and number of counties in the RPO.

#### **Standard Documents**

##### Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The [MOU](#) establishes the membership, bylaws and voting structure of the RPO. It also identifies the overall responsibilities of the RPO. All member counties must sign the MOU. Municipalities within the RPO may sign the MOU or adopt a resolution in support of the RPO. Any municipal resolutions must be submitted along with the MOU.

##### Funding Agreement

Each RPO is required to adopt an agreement that establishes rules for disbursement and accounting of RPO grant funds. The Agreement for Disbursement and Accounting of Rural Transportation Planning Funds is the continuing agreement between the LPA and NCDOT. NCDOT may provide reimbursement to the designated LPA only. The LPA may enact sub-agreement(s) pertaining to the local match. A [Funding Award Letter](#) is provided to the LPA at the end of each calendar year detailing the available RPO funding for the coming fiscal year. The fiscal year runs from July 1 – June 30.

### Bylaws

[Bylaws](#) govern the membership, voting structure, and meeting procedures of the TCC and TAC. Bylaws for the RPO may be adopted and revised by the TAC from time to time.

### Prospectus

The [Prospectus](#) is a formal reference guide that provides a detailed description of the full range of potential work elements that are eligible for inclusion in a planning work program.

### Public Involvement Plan or Policy (PIP)

The [PIP](#) is a formally adopted statement policy or plan regarding public involvement activities related to the work of the RPO. The PIP provides guidance to staff to ensure adequate public review techniques and opportunities are provided, based on specific activities, documents or processes.

### Planning Work Program (PWP)

The [PWP](#) is a standard document that consists of a funding table. The PWP is prepared on an annual basis to identify the planning priorities for the coming year and to define the planning work products and activities to be carried out by the RPO staff. Estimated expenditures for each major category of work are provided in the funding table.

### Planning Work Program Amendment

[Planning Work Program Amendments](#) may be required from time to time to detail major shifts in work activities that will impact funding allocations.

### Five Year Planning Calendar

The [Five-Year Planning Calendar](#) is a standard document that connects the short-term goals of the annual planning work program to the long term goals and priorities of the RPO. This should be reviewed and revised each year.

### Quarterly Report Package

The progress report package is a standard set of documents consisting of an [Invoice Cover Letter](#), [Invoice](#), and a [Quarterly Expenditure Table](#). The cover letter and the invoice are standard documents that accompany a quarterly expenditure table. The invoice details the LPA request for reimbursement of eligible RPO expenses for the quarter with a breakdown of direct and indirect costs. The quarterly expenditures table highlights the transportation planning work accomplished by the LPA over the last quarter and identifies resulting planning work products.

### Final Yearly Narrative

The [Final Yearly Narrative](#) is a standard document submitted in conjunction with the final quarterly report of each fiscal year. The report consists of a narrative review of the accomplishments of the RPO over the past year in comparison to the adopted planning work program. The document further describes any significant changes to the LPA, local membership or other concerns that impacted the RPO over the past year.

### CTP List of Study Needs

Each calendar year the RPO reviews and prioritizes small urban and county transportation planning study needs for their area. The [CTP List of Study Needs](#) will provide sufficient detail regarding jurisdiction, status of the local development plan, and previous transportation plans and be submitted to NCDOT annually.

### TIP Project Prioritization

The RPO develops a list of its region's transportation project requests (including all modes of transportation) and enters these projects into NCDOT's prioritization process. As part of the

process, the RPO will rank or score individual projects to show their relative priority within the region. For more information regarding the process please refer to:

<http://www.ncdot.gov/performance/reform/>.

#### TIP Review and Comment

After a draft STIP is released by NCDOT for public comment, the RPO reviews all information for projects within its region and makes comments as necessary regarding the accuracy of the information and any local issues or concerns. This process takes place every two years.

#### Merger Process

RPOs may participate in the Merger process as concurring members. Concurring members have signature authority for Merger projects in their areas and will attend Merger project meetings and adhere to the Project Team Member roles and responsibilities. Merger meetings are scheduled to discuss the progression of the project, the issues, and the steps going forward. For more information regarding the process please refer to:

<http://www.ncdot.gov/doh/preconstruct/pe/MERGER01/>.

#### RPO Manual Updates

From time to time changes to document templates, procedures and timelines may occur and will be reflected in a timely manner in this manual. Proposed changes may be reviewed by NCDOT and RPO staff. The most current version of the manual will be made available on the NCDOT website.

## RPO Program Administration

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### Reorganizing an RPO

1. Identify three or more contiguous counties with a minimum population of 50,000 that wish to form a RPO.
2. Contact the NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch (TPB) and prospective LPA to discuss the formation or revision of the RPO.
3. Review and revise standard [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) to reflect the desired RPO structure. Submit draft to designated NCDOT staff for review.
4. Prepare final MOU document, reflecting any additional revisions.
5. Present final MOU to each county, the LPA and NCDOT for approval. Original signatures and seals must appear on a single page(s). Municipalities within the boundaries of the proposed RPO may adopt a resolution stating their support for the formation of the proposed RPO within ninety (90) days of final approval.
6. Submit the signed MOU in triplicate to designated NCDOT staff, along with municipal resolutions. One original copy will be returned to the LPA with original signatures.
7. Submit documentation to designated NCDOT staff to verify the LPA has been authorized by its Board to receive funds on behalf of the RPO.
8. Conduct a chartering ceremony in cooperation with NCDOT and participating local officials.
9. Complete the Funding Agreement Process returning all signed copies to NCDOT. One original copy will be returned to the LPA.
10. Present TCC/TAC with a draft [Prospectus](#), [Planning Work Program](#) and [Five-Year Planning Calendar](#) for consideration and approval. Approval of these documents is required prior to receiving reimbursement by NCDOT.

### Revising an Existing Memorandum of Understanding

From time to time NCDOT, the LPA or any other [MOU](#) signatory may request a revision to the adopted MOU. Changing the LPA or the membership of RPO counties would trigger a revision to the MOU. Consultation between the LPA, NCDOT and MOU signatories is required to facilitate any revision to an adopted MOU.

- Review and revise the existing MOU to reflect the desired changes. Submit draft to designated NCDOT staff for review.
- Prepare final MOU document, reflecting any additional revisions.
- Present final MOU in to the RPO TCC and TAC for approval.
- Present final MOU to each county, the LPA and NCDOT for approval. Original signatures and seals must appear on a single page(s). Municipalities within the boundaries of the proposed RPO may adopt a resolution stating their support for the revised MOU within ninety (90) days of final approval.
- Submit the signed MOU and the municipal resolutions in triplicate to designated NCDOT staff, along with municipal resolutions. One original copy will be returned to the LPA with original signatures.



## Revising an Existing Bylaws

RPOs are required to have [Bylaws](#) that define how meetings will be conducted within the RPO as well as outlining the procedure for various RPO processes. A change to the bylaws typically necessary when some aspects of the bylaws need to be clarified that was not explicitly stated in the bylaws, conflicting laws, a change in the LPA, or an MOU change. In order for the bylaws to have legal standing, the bylaws must be adopted by the TAC and should be signed by the RPO Secretary and the TAC Chairman.

## Revising an Existing Funding Agreement

From time to time NCDOT and the LPA may request a revision of the existing Funding Agreement. Changing the LPA or changes in the level of RPO funding level would trigger a revision to the Funding Agreement.

1. Request the TPB RPO Program Manager to provide the LPA Projects Management Unit with the latest copy of the Funding Agreement and the [Agreement Checklist](#).
2. Fill out the Agreement Checklist and forward it along with the latest copy of the Funding Agreement to the designated NCDOT staff listed on the checklist.
3. NCDOT will provide the LPA Project Management Unit with the revised Funding Agreement for approval and signatures.
4. Present final Funding Agreement in to the RPO TCC and TAC.
5. TAC approves the revised funding level.

## Preparing a Planning Work Program (PWP) and an Administrative Reporting Schedule

An adopted [PWP](#) must be submitted to NCDOT by May 31<sup>st</sup> to be eligible to receive reimbursement from NCDOT for RPO work activities in the fiscal year beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> of the same calendar year. Costs incurred on work activities outside an adopted PWP will not be reimbursed.

### PWP Timeline

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <b>November</b> | Consult with NCDOT staff, RPO member governments and agencies to identify work tasks, review financial assumptions for the coming fiscal year and develop <a href="#">Administrative Reporting Schedule</a> .  |
| <b>January</b>  | <a href="#">Funding Award Letter</a> is received (digitally and by hard copy) detailing available funds and required local match. Prepare draft PWP for designated NCDOT staff review within 30 days of receipt of the funding letter. Release Draft PWP for public review if required by an adopted <a href="#">Public Involvement Plan</a> . |
| <b>February</b> | NCDOT staff comments on PWP and Administrative Reporting Schedule returned to RPO within 45 days of submittal to NCDOT. Prepare revisions to PWP and schedule if required.   |
| <b>April</b>    | Conduct TCC/TAC review and adoption process. Prepare revisions to PWP if required. An original signature of the TAC Chair must appear on the adopted PWP.  |
| <b>May</b>      | Transmit one (1) digital copy of the <u>adopted and signed</u> PWP (PDF format), one (1) digital copy of the PWP (Excel format), and one (1) digital copy of the Administrative Reporting Schedule to designated NCDOT staff by May 31 <sup>st</sup> .   |
| <b>June</b>     | <a href="#">PWP Approval Letter</a> issued by NCDOT.   |

## **PWP Guidance**

- The Miscellaneous Expenses item is restricted to **no more than 10% of the total RPO budget**.
- The use of private consultants by an RPO is permitted for the amount of **up to \$5,000** with prior approval (No RFP is required),
- Funds which have not been expended at the end of the fiscal year do not carry forward.
- If no comments are received by the dates listed above, proceed with review and adoption process according to above timeline.

## **Revising an Adopted PWP**

Revisions to an adopted Planning Work Program are required if there is a significant change in budget, work tasks or expenditure allocation and could be processed throughout the fiscal year (as long as there will be adequate time for the public involvement and approval process through TCC, TAC and NCDOT before the end of fiscal year). All revisions to the adopted PWP must be completed by May 31<sup>st</sup> of the same fiscal year. No amendments will be processed past this date.

## **PWP Amendment Guidance**

Review adopted PWP to determine if changes to work tasks are considered Major or Minor revisions:

### **Minor PWP Revisions**

- **A variance of 100% or \$2,500 (whichever is less) for a category** is considered a minor revision and is allowed without amendment if approved in advance by the TPB RPO Coordinator.
  - Prepare revised funding table noting adopted and revised funding amounts.
  - Transmit one (1) digital copy of the signed PWP revision to designated NCDOT staff for review and approval (Excel format).
  - NCDOT staff will send e-mail to RPO with revision approval.

### **Major PWP Revisions**

- **A variance of more than 100% or \$2,500 (whichever is lower)** for a category is considered a major revision and requires amendment and must be reviewed and approved by both, the TCC and TAC.
  - Prepare [Amended PWP](#), noting added or deleted work tasks. Submit revised PWP documents to designated NCDOT staff for review and approval.
  - NCDOT staff comments are returned to RPO within 10 business days. If no comments are received, proceed with review and adoption process.
  - Conduct public review of the revised PWP if required (as per RPO's [Public Involvement Plan](#)).
  - Conduct TCC/TAC review and adoption process. The original signature of the TAC Chair must appear on the revised PWP.
  - Transmit one (1) digital copy of the amended and signed PWP revision (PDF format) and one (1) digital copy of the amended PWP (Excel format) to designated NCDOT staff.

## **Preparing a Quarterly Report Package**

Reimbursement for planning expenses is facilitated through the submittal of a Quarterly Report Package each quarter to NCDOT. The submittal package must include an [Invoice Cover Letter](#), [Invoice](#), and a [Quarterly Expenditure Table](#). An RPO must submit deliverables accounted for in the quarterly report package in order for the payment being processed.

### **Quarterly Report Package Timeline**

#### **September 30<sup>th</sup> First quarter ends**

**November 10<sup>th</sup>** First quarter Report Package due to designated NCDOT staff

#### **December 31<sup>st</sup> Second quarter ends**

**February 10<sup>th</sup>** Final second Report Package due to designated NCDOT staff

#### **March 31<sup>st</sup> Third quarter ends**

**May 10<sup>th</sup>** Final third Report Package due to designated NCDOT staff

#### **June 30<sup>th</sup> Fourth quarter ends**

**August 10<sup>th</sup>** Final fourth Report Package due to designated NCDOT staff

### **Quarterly Report Package Guidance**

- Reimbursement will only be made for qualifying expenses incurred in executing work tasks described in the PWP.
- Quarterly Report Package will not be processed without all of the required documents.
- Quarterly Report Package not received by the dates above will not be processed until the end of the following quarter. If an RPO anticipates that the invoice cannot be submitted on time, contact designated NCDOT staff prior to the deadline or as soon as possible.
- Final submittal consists of one (1) digital, signed copy of the Quarterly Report Package (PDF Format) and one (1) digital [Quarterly Expenditure Table](#) (Excel format).
- Revisions to the Quarterly Report Package may be required based on NCDOT review. Requested revisions will be returned to the RPO within 30 days of the submittal deadline. Revisions must be completed prior to the payment being processed.
- Expenses cannot be charged against PWP categories on the quarterly expenditure table without an amount budgeted.
- No more than the total funding allocation shall be reimbursed during the fiscal year.
- The final quarterly report package shall include the [Final Yearly Narrative](#).

## Preparing a CTP Study Priority List

A Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) is a collaborative effort of NCDOT planning staff, RPO staff and local jurisdiction(s). Local jurisdictions may request a CTP or an update to an existing CTP through the RPO.

TPB will provide an updated [CTP List of Study Needs Spreadsheet](#) to the RPOs by **August 1st**. Each RPO must review its local and regional transportation planning needs and present a prioritized CTP List of Study Needs Spreadsheet to designated NCDOT staff by **November 1<sup>st</sup>** of each year. To be eligible for inclusion on the list, each jurisdiction must have a land development plan approved within the last five (5) years or be willing to undertake a land development planning process in conjunction with the CTP. The listing of a jurisdiction on the priority list does not guarantee that the study will be assigned or initiated and CTP studies may not be assigned in priority order because of funding, staff resources or other constraints. CTP studies may also be initiated by NCDOT in response to project delivery needs. For further information on CTP Study needs process please refer to: [Comprehensive Transportation Plan Prioritization](#) documentation.

## Local Project Prioritization

Each RPO is responsible for the development of a prioritized list by mode of its region's transportation projects (including highway, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian, and rail projects) and the entry of those projects into the state's prioritization process.

## Preparing a TIP Priority Needs List

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is prepared by NCDOT on a biennial basis according to a schedule adopted by the Board of Transportation. The identification and prioritization of the RPO TIP project proposals should include significant input from local officials and the public. Specific guidance related to the use of the online database for submitting transportation-related project priorities is provided by NCDOT separately. For more information regarding the process please refer to: <http://www.ncdot.gov/performance/reform/>.

## Conducting Evaluations

Evaluation of the RPO program occurs on an annual basis through standardized surveys along with NCDOT's review of work products. The purpose of program evaluation is to ensure that high quality RPO services are being provided and to identify areas for potential improvement. The evaluation process includes opportunities to receive feedback from customers, RPOs, and NCDOT. Individual RPOs participate in the evaluation process through deployment of the survey and assisting member governments with completion of the evaluation tool. TPB staff is responsible for reviewing RPO deliverables and providing feedback to the RPO staff within twelve (12) business days after receiving Quarterly Report Package.

Evaluation Timeline:

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>August-October</b>   | Conduct evaluation   |
| <b>October-November</b> | Designated NCDOT Staff conducts review of the RPO work products.   |
| <b>December</b>         | Review combined results. Identify issues; develop elements in the PWP that respond to issues identified in the survey results. |
| <b>January</b>          | Conduct one-on-one RPO review meetings.  |
| <b>March</b>            | Conduct RPO review of TPB staff.   |

Evaluation Guidance

- [RPO Customer Evaluation Survey](#) is conducted on a biennial basis.
- [RPO Deliverable Evaluation Survey](#) is conducted yearly.
- RPO Customer Evaluation Surveys are conducted primarily through an on-line survey tool. Surveys may be distributed to TAC and TCC members in a paper format. Evaluation methodology will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that the surveys are being deployed in a reasonable way that ensures adequate participation from each RPO.
- Evaluation results will be compiled by TPB Staff. Analysis and interpretation of survey results will be done cooperatively by RPO and TPB staff. Summary results as well as individual survey responses will be provided to the RPO in advance of one-on-one RPO review meetings.
- Concerns identified through the survey process will be tracked from year to year by RPO and TPB staff to ensure adequate progress is made toward resolving related issues.
- Consistently poor evaluation results or inadequate progress on identified issues may result in a request by NCDOT for alternate staffing or a change of the LPA.

## Accounting

The LPA shall establish a separate account for the RPO Funds for each fiscal year and shall record all transactions in accordance with acceptable accounting procedures, as approved by the NCDOT. The account established for planning funds will be included in the annual audit of the agency. [Article 49 CFR 18](#) outlines standards for grantee financial management systems. Time spent for staff services on work provided for in the PWP should be recorded by work task standard time sheets for each individual and filed for audit purposes. Invoices must conform to [RPO Audit Procedures](#).

Pursuant to Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Regulations, RPOs must furnish its Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) to the State. If this number is not provided, the RPOs may be subject to a 20% withholding on each payment. To avoid this 20% withholding and to ensure that accurate tax information is reported to the Internal Revenue Service and the State, the RPOs must use [W-9](#) form to provide the requested information exactly as it appears on file with the IRS.

Each RPO is required to submit previous **Fiscal Year's Indirect Cost Allocation Plan** along with the submittal of the **Planning Work Program**.

## Audits

A copy of the LPA audit is obtained for the previous fiscal year from the Local Government Commission each year. Once the final payment has been made for the fiscal year, the contract for the year will be closed and no further payments may be made. These may be updated from year to year. Refer to the [NCDOT External Audit Section](#) for current procedures and to [RPO Audit Procedures](#) for reference.

## Expenditures

Expenditures will be reimbursed based solely on the provisions of [Senate Bill 1195 which amended General Statute 136, Article 17](#) as they relate to planning requirements. Reimbursement will only be made for qualifying expenses incurred in executing work tasks described in the PWP. Expenses fall into two categories: direct and indirect. Indirect items must be identified in the approved LPA indirect cost plan as directed by OMB Circular A-87. Items not address below will be considered on a case by case basis.

### Permitted Direct Expenditures

- Salaries and payroll additive costs, transportation expenses, office expenses and expendable supplies related to executing work tasks within an approved PWP.
- Printing, advertising, copying, computer processing, mapping and aerial photography costs as related to executing work tasks within an approved PWP.
- The purchase of special equipment and materials required to execute work tasks within an approved PWP. Purchases for the exclusive use of the RPO must be made in accordance with NCDOT requirements related to minority business enterprises (MBE).
- Reimbursements to other LPA agencies, local governments or state agencies for eligible expenditures incurred in executing work tasks within an approved PWP.
- Auditing costs associated with fulfilling State requirements.



Permitted Indirect Expenditures

- Accounting
- Building Lease & Maintenance
- Exhibits
- Payroll Preparation
- Taxes
- Audit Services
- Communications
- Materials & Supplies
- Personnel Administration
- Training and Education
- Budgeting
- Fringe Benefits
- Memberships, Subscriptions & Professional Activities
- Procurement Services

Permitted Expenditures, with Prior Approval by NCDOT

- Computers
- Insurance & Indemnification
- Equipment
- Building Space & Related Facilities
- Professional Services
- Capital Expenditures
- Out-of-State Travel (Training/Conference)

Unacceptable Expenditures

- Bad Debt
- Interest & Other Finance Costs
- Entertainment
- Management Studies
- Proposal Costs
- Contributions & Donations
- Under-Recovery of Costs on Grant Agreements
- Governor's Expenses
- Pre-Agreement Costs
- Fines & Penalties
- Contingencies
- Legislative Expenses

**Conducting RPO Meetings**

It is recommended that each RPO conducts at least four (4) meetings per calendar year. Meetings may consist of separate or joint TAC and TCC meetings and should occur at a time and place that supports broad participation by its members. Electronic meetings are permitted as long as public notice is given and a location for public participation in the meeting is provided. A meeting must have a quorum to conduct businesses of any type. A quorum is defined as 51% of the voting membership as outlined in your adopted bylaws.

- The TAC, TCC and any subcommittees are considered public bodies under North Carolina law and are subject to the [Open Meetings Law and Open Records Law](#).
- An alternate may be appointed to attend meetings should the member not be able to attend. Alternates should be identified by position in the bylaws and by name in the membership roster. Vacant seats as defined in the bylaws will not count against the quorum.
- No secret ballot voting is allowed under North Carolina Law. However, written ballots are allowed provided they are signed by each voter and included in the meeting record after the vote is taken. Written ballots shall be available for public inspection immediately following the meeting at which the written vote took place until the minutes of the meeting are approved.

- A schedule of regular meetings should be kept with the clerk of the county in which the meetings are held, with the LPA's clerk, or as described in the adopted bylaws. If the schedule is changed, the changes should be given to the clerk at least one week prior to the meeting.
- Notice for meetings not listed on the schedule, other than an emergency meeting, should be posted at the door of the usual meeting room(s), public notice bulletin board and delivered to each media outlet and any individual that has filed a written request for notice 48 hours prior to the meeting.
- For an emergency meeting, the committee shall provide notice to local media outlets that have filed a request. Notice for emergency meetings shall be given by the same method used to notify the members of the committee and shall be given immediately following notice to those members.

### **RPO Records**

Records related to RPO activities and work products must be maintained in perpetuity by the LPA. If the LPA is changed, all records must be transferred.

Any records pertaining to the RPO must be made available to the public for free or for a minimal fee that represents the actual cost of copying. Membership records, meeting minutes showing attendance and voting outcomes, documents, electronic files, GIS layers, recordings and any other documentation are subject to public inspection unless they meet criteria for exemption as described by the Public Records Statutes.

### **RPO Equipment**

Any equipment purchased for the sole benefit and use of the RPO shall be maintained through its useful life as defined by the LPA. An equipment inventory must be kept current. If the LPA is changed, all RPO equipment must be transferred or the agreed upon dollar value of RPO equipment must be transferred to the new LPA.



## Transportation Acronyms

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| AADT            | Annual Average Daily Traffic                                       |
| AASHTO          | American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials |
| ADA             | Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)                             |
| AFV             | Alternative Fuel Vehicle   |
| AMPO            | Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations                 |
| APTA            | American Public Transportation Association                         |
| AQ              | Air Quality  |
| BOT             | Board of Transportation (NCDOT)                                    |
| 3-C             | Continuing, Cooperative, Comprehensive                             |
| CAA             | Clean Air Act (1970)   |
| CAAA            | Clean Air Act Amendments (1990)                                    |
| CFR             | Code of Federal Regulations (Federal Register)                     |
| CIP             | Capital Improvement Program  |
| CMAQ            | Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality                              |
| CMS             | Congestion Management System                                       |
| CO              | Carbon Monoxide  |
| CO <sub>2</sub> | Carbon Dioxide   |
| CTP             | Comprehensive Transportation Plan                                  |
| CTPP            | Census Transportation Planning Package                             |
| DBE             | Disadvantaged Business Enterprise                                  |
| DEIS            | Draft Environmental Impact Statement                               |
| EA              | Environmental Assessment   |
| EAC             | Early Action Compact (EPA)   |
| EIS             | Environmental Impact Statement                                     |
| EPA             | Environmental Protection Agency (Federal)                          |
| FAA             | Federal Aviation Administration                                    |
| FFY             | Federal Fiscal Year (Oct 1 – Sept 30)                              |
| FHWA            | Federal Highway Administration                                     |
| FMCSA           | Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration                        |
| FR              | Federal Register   |
| FTA             | Federal Transit Administration                                     |
| GARVEE          | Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicle (NC Bond)                       |

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| GIS             | Geographic Information System                                     |
| HOV             | High Occupancy Vehicle (Lane)                                     |
| HOT             | High Occupancy Toll (Lane)  |
| HRRR            | High Risk Rural Road  |
| HSIP            | Highway Safety Improvement Program                                |
| ILT             | Interagency Leadership Team                                       |
| ISTEA           | Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (1991)           |
| ITRE            | Institute for Transportation Research and Education (NC State)    |
| ITS             | Intelligent Transportation System                                 |
| LOS             | Level of Service  |
| LPA             | Lead Planning Agency  |
| LRTP            | Long Range Transportation Plan (MPO)                              |
| MOA             | Memorandum of Agreement   |
| MOU             | Memorandum of Understanding                                       |
| MPO             | Metropolitan Planning Organization                                |
| MSA             | Metropolitan Statistical Area                                     |
| MTIP            | Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program                   |
| MUTCD           | Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices                         |
| NAA             | Non-Attainment Area   |
| NAAQS           | National Ambient Air Quality Standards                            |
| NADO            | National Association of Development Organizations                 |
| NCAMPO          | North Carolina Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations |
| NCARPO          | North Carolina Association of Rural Planning Organizations        |
| NCDOT           | North Carolina Department of Transportation                       |
| NCPTA           | North Carolina Public Transportation Association                  |
| NCTA            | North Carolina Turnpike Authority                                 |
| NEPA            | National Environmental Policy Act (1969)                          |
| NHS             | National Highway System   |
| NO <sub>x</sub> | Nitrogen Oxide  |
| PDEA            | Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch (NCDOT)     |
| PM 2.5          | Particulate Matter, 2.5 micrometers                               |
| PPP             | Public Involvement Plan   |
| PTD             | Public Transportation Division (NCDOT)                            |
| PWP             | Planning Work Program   |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| RGP        | Rural General Public (Transit)   |
| ROAP       | Rural Operating Assistance Program (Transit)   |
| ROW        | Right Of Way   |
| RPO        | Rural Planning Organization  |
| RSA        | Road Safety Audit  |
| SAFETEA-LU | Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (2005) |
| SFY        | State Fiscal Year (July 1 – June 30)   |
| SIP        | State Implementation Plan (Air Quality)  |
| SPOT       | Strategic Planning Office of Transportation (NCDOT)  |
| SRTS       | Safe Routes to School  |
| STAA       | Surface Transportation Assistance Act (1982)   |
| STIP       | State Transportation Improvement Program   |
| STP        | Surface Transportation Program   |
| SOV        | Single Occupancy Vehicle   |
| TAC        | Transportation Advisory Committee (Local Elected Officials)                                  |
| TAZ        | Transportation Analysis Zone   |
| TCC        | Technical Coordinating Committee (Local Staff)   |
| TCM        | Traffic Calming/Control Measure  |
| TDM        | Transportation Demand Management   |
| TEA        | Transportation Enhancement Activity  |
| TEA-21     | Transportation Equity Act for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century (1998)                            |
| TIA        | Traffic Impact Analysis  |
| TIP        | Transportation Improvement Program   |
| TMA        | Transportation Management Area (population of 200,000+)                                      |
| TOD        | Transit Oriented Development   |
| TPB        | Transportation Planning Branch (NCDOT)   |
| TRB        | Transportation Research Board  |
| USDOT      | United States Department of Transportation   |
| UAB        | Urbanized Area Boundary  |
| USC        | United States Code   |
| VMT        | Vehicle Miles of Travel  |
| VOC        | Volatile Organic Compounds   |

## Reference Material List

### **WWW Links and Reference Documents:**

[Senate Bill 1195](#)

[Article 49 CFR 18](#)

[TIP Prioritization](#)

[Merger Process](#)

[Open Meetings Law and Open Records Law](#)

[NCDOT External Audit Section](#)

[CTP Study Needs Documentation](#)

[Prospectus](#)

### **Standard Documents - Examples:**

[Funding Award Letter](#)

[PWP Approval Letter](#)

[Five-Year Planning Calendar](#)

[RPO Quarterly Invoice Cover Letter](#)

[RPO Quarterly Invoice Letter](#)

[Final Yearly Narrative](#)

### **Standard Documents - Templates:**

[CTP List of Study Needs Spreadsheet](#)

[PWP-Invoice-Amendment Templates](#)

[Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#)

[Bylaws](#)

[Public Involvement Policy \(PIP\)](#)

[RPO Customer Evaluation Survey](#)

[RPO Deliverable Evaluation Survey](#)

[RPO Audit Procedures](#)

[W-9 Form](#)